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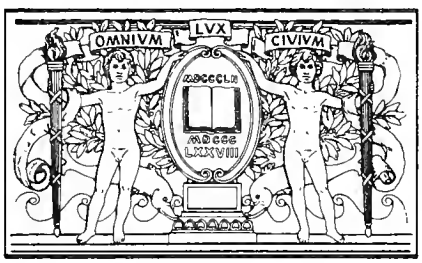

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REVIEW OF
FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS
ON
FINANCE COMMISSION REPORT

gage·babcock & associates, inc.
SAN FRANCISCO • LOS ANGELES • CHICAGO • NEW YORK

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REVIEW OF FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS ON FINANCE COMMISSION REPORT

Prepared for:

THE FINANCE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

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Respectfully submitted

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Project Engineer

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INTRODUCTION

At the request of the City of Boston Finance Commission, Gage-Babcock & Associates, Inc. have reviewed the comments received from the Boston Fire Department on the report on the fire department prepared for the Finance Commission by Gage-Babcock & Associates, Inc. The Finance Commission report was dated April, 1969 and was transmitted to the Hon. Kevin H. White, Mayor of the City of Boston, on June 6, 1969.

The comments from the fire department consisted of separate memoranda from the Fire Commissioner, 22 chief officers, and the Boston Firefighters Local #718, International Association of Fire Fighters, AFL-CIO. Also included was a copy of a letter from Mr. Warren T. Kimball of the National Fire Protection Association to the President of Local #718 concerning the Boston Fire Department in general, but not commenting on the Finance Commission report. The letter from Mr. Kimball was prepared before the report was completed and issued.

In this report, general, overall comments by Gage-Babcock are presented first, followed by a detailed listing of each recommendation, showing the recommendation, a summary of the fire department comments on the recommendation, and Gage-Babcock's comments. No attempt has been made to list every single comment of the fire department, this would merely add to the bulk of this report and would be largely repetitious. Rather, the fire department's comments are summarized and only some of the pertinent comments quoted directly.

This report was prepared by C. J. Winquist, P.E., Project Engineer for the original study. It has been reviewed by other staff members and reflects staff consensus.

GENERAL OVERALL COMMENTS

The Finance Commission report was quite critical of the fire department and it is only natural that the fire department would feel called upon to defend itself against some of the criticism. In general it can be said that the fire department agrees that the condition of apparatus and the condition of the fire station is poor but disagrees that there has been ineffective use of manpower, that more fire companies than needed are being operated, that full and proper use of the training facilities are not being made, or that maximum benefit from adequately staffed fire prevention bureau is not being obtained.

Gage-Babcock has carefully and objectively reviewed all the fire department comments and can find nothing in the comments to cause a change in the basic conclusions of the study, namely that the fire department as presently operated is not providing the level of protection which can and should be expected and that the overall level of protection being provided is only fair with some aspects poor.

The review of the comments did disclose two minor errors or inconsistencies in the original report, but these are not serious and do not change any conclusions. It was recommended that Ladder Co. 3 be eliminated, but in the discussion of the recommendation reference is made to the relocation of Ladder Co. 3; this latter reference should have been Ladder Co. 17. An error in reporting on ladder pipes was due to an error in the fire department inventory records.

In an attempt to discredit the report, many chiefs commented that the report contained numerous errors, inaccuracies, and inconsistencies; however, the above two items were the only specific features mentioned. It can only be concluded that the other comments applied to the conclusions and recommendations rather than the factual data. From the very wording of many of the comments, it is obvious that many of the chiefs and the union did not review the report objectively. However, the comments of both the Fire Commissioner and the Chief of Department did reflect an objective review.

There are numerous comments on the competency of the participating engineers, many directed to the fact that the engineers had not served as members of the Boston Fire Department specifically or any fire department generally. Questionning the competency of the authors of critical reports is a more or less standard method of trying to discredit a report when it cannot be done by other means. These comments really warrant little counter comment. Just for the record, all the participating engineers had previous experience working with fire departments despite one specific comment to the

contrary. The project engineer has 20 years experience with fire departments. He has had experience in evaluating fire departments of all sizes ranging from considerably larger than Boston to very small volunteer departments and even combined police-fire departments. He has actual experience in preparing plans and specifications for fire department apparatus and equipment and complete municipal fire alarm systems. He has observed and participated in fire fighting activities across the country.

As mentioned in the original report, many of the practices criticized in the report have been in effect in the Boston Fire Department for many years and thus, to some extent, have been accepted without question. In very plain language, this is a large part of the problem; many of the people in the fire department just do not know any better. This is well illustrated by the many comments concerning the possibility of break-down of apparatus while responding to a fire. This is, apparently, accepted as a way of life; however in most progressive fire departments the break-down of an apparatus while responding to a fire is considered as an event which just should not happen and an event which calls for a thorough investigation. Another example is the poor housekeeping conditions permitted in the stations. There were many comments that the training program was good; these comments reflect a complete lack of understanding of just what a good training program actually can do. It would be worthwhile to permit higher ranking chief officers to visit a few good fire departments to observe operations. If these assignments were undertaken with an open mind, the men would return to Boston not only critical of Boston's operations but embarrassed by some of the existing practices. In considering the comments of the fire department, the previous fact should be kept in mind. Most of the chiefs have not been exposed to other fire departments and thus their comments are related to past practices of the Boston Fire Department. The situations peculiar to Boston are cited as reason for some of the practices. Actually, every city has situations which are peculiar to the specific city. All large cities have traffic problems and most also have old congested districts with buildings of inferior construction. Boston does have some peculiar fire problems, such as the large amount of wood frame 3-deckers; these have been recognized in developing conclusions and recommendations.

Several comments were made concerning the fact that the report offered no suggestions for eliminating the problem of civil disturbances or the problems of false alarms. This is plain ridiculous. It is fully recognized that civil disturbances and false alarms create tremendous problems for the fire department; however, the purpose of the study was not to try to correct social problems and the two items mentioned are strictly social problems which cannot be solved by fire department operations or practices. The logical suggestion to reduce the false alarm problem was unanimously rejected despite the fact that the false alarms are lowering the fire protection of the City of Boston.

Several chiefs commented that the statement concerning the failure to comply with the recommendations in the 1954 report was incorrect. The facts are that the statement is correct. It was recommended that the number of divisions be reduced from three to two and the number of districts from 14 to 11; this was done. It was recommended that 9 engine companies and seven ladder companies be eliminated; six engine companies and five ladder companies were eliminated. It was recommended that 5 additional rescue companies be established; this was not done. It was recommended that only 10 engine companies be equipped with two pieces of apparatus (and this was recommended solely to meet Underwriter standards in effect at the time, which have since been changed); sixteen of the engine companies are presently equipped with two pieces of apparatus. It was recommended that the large number of uniformed personnel assigned to non-firefighting duties be drastically reduced; if anything, there are more such assignments now. It was recommended that aides assigned to non-firefighting chief officers be eliminated; this has not been done. It was recommended that number of men on injured leave be closely controlled; this has not been done. Basically none of the recommendations for improvement in manpower utilization have been carried out and only some of the recommendations concerning reduction in the number of companies have been followed.

There were also numerous comments on the statement in the report concerning the committing of large forces of men and apparatus to extinguish fires in buildings in which no salvage was possible. Many interpreted this as implying that all that should be done is to protect exposures and let the original burn. This is not what the statement says nor what was meant. Quite often however, a large fire will be cited as proving that more men and equipment are needed when the facts are that the same end result could have been achieved with a much lower number of each. In the words of a chief of a major city fire department, many fires are fought for the benefit of TV cameras and news photographers. As mentioned in the report, a start has been made on means to measure the results which can be expected from various levels of efforts. In the not too distant future it will be possible to predetermine the maximum response of men and apparatus to all locations in the city. This comment applies not only to fire extinguishing activities but also to life saving activities.

Almost every chief, somewhere in his comments, mentions the saving of life by the fire department. No one can question the fact that this is the prime responsibility of the fire department and certainly no one can question the fact that over the years the fire department has saved many lives. Of prime importance for life safety is speed of response and adequate manpower. The past practices of the fire department, which are defended by the department, work contrary to these important items. The poor condition of apparatus can cause the response time to be increased and the poor manpower

utilization has resulted in badly undermanned companies. Although the fire department cannot be blamed for the false alarms, the large number of false alarms can easily result in the nearest fire companies not being available when a life safety problem is presented. Yet, the chiefs almost unanimously oppose the logical recommendation to remove fire alarm boxes being used to transmit the false alarms. It is much more likely that a life may be lost because the nearest companies were not available rather than a life being lost because a fire alarm box was not available.

It is interesting that no one commented on the overall beneficial effects to be realized by compliance with the recommendations, namely better manned companies, improved maintenance of apparatus, improved maintenance of fire stations, and cost savings to be realized through better manpower utilization. In commenting on the specific recommendations none of the chiefs or the union related the effect of one recommendation on another. There was no comment whatsoever, for example, on the improved protection to be realized by the better manned companies. The overall program must be considered in any effective review of the recommendations.

As stated, the review of the fire department comments has not resulted in any change in conclusions or evaluations. The Boston Fire Department is one of the least effective of any major cities. Some of the conditions which have been permitted to exist are still unbelievable. Unfortunately, from reviewing the comments, it appears that most of the chief officers are not aware of how poor conditions actually are and of how a modern progressive fire department should be operated. There is no reason why the Boston Fire Department should not be one of the best; the citizens and taxpayers should not only expect this, they should demand it. A much better fire department is possible at much lower cost. Compliance with the recommendations in the Finance Commission report will in no way increase life loss potential or property loss potential, to the contrary, it will greatly reduce both. A purely objective review of the report can come up with no other conclusion.

REVIEW OF FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

ON GAGE-BABCOCK & ASSOCIATES, INC. REPORT

Rec. 1. Reorganize the maintenance division under a competent Superintendent of Maintenance, with a total authorized strength of 43, a reduction of 45 positions from the present authorized strength.

F. D. Comments: The present Superintendent of Maintenance has been in the position for only one year, conditions were poor when he was appointed, and he has not had time to make needed improvements.

Forcing the fire department to accept poor apparatus based on low bids has contributed greatly to the poor condition of apparatus.

When an adequate apparatus replacement program is inaugurated the situation will correct itself.

The entire maintenance division does need a reorganization.

Reduction in shop personnel could be possible when new apparatus arrives, not feasible now because of poor condition of apparatus.

Recommended that all apparatus repair, except that of an emergency nature, be contracted to private concerns until such time as the Division is ready to accept and do repair work efficiently.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Several persons commented on the fact that the present Superintendent of Maintenance had only held the position for a short time. It was not the intent of the Gage-Babcock report to place the responsibility for the poor situation in the maintenance division upon any individual. The situation has existed for many years under several Fire Commissioners and Superintendents of Maintenance. What is significant in the fire department comments is that most of the people, either directly or by implication, acknowledge that the maintenance division does need reorganization, and that a poor situation does exist. In commenting on subsequent recommendations for a reduction in the number of companies, many of chiefs use

the possibility of a breakdown of apparatus as a justification for retaining a greater number of companies. The frequency of this comment indicates that this is not an uncommon experience. Actually the breakdown of apparatus while attempting to respond to a fire should be a very rare occurrence. This is just another indication of the poor maintenance program in the Boston Fire Department. In his twenty years of experience in consulting with and evaluating fire departments of all sizes in all sections of the country, the project engineer has never witnessed apparatus in as poor condition as that of the Boston Fire Department. The comments on the purchase of apparatus will be discussed later in this report.

Rec. 2. Completely rehabilitate all apparatus, placing it in top mechanical condition. It will be necessary to establish a priority basis, based on condition and need.

F. D. Comments: The rehabilitation of fire apparatus to a high peak of efficiency is certainly desirable. We are preceeding as rapidly as possible to accomplish this end but with old equipment which is presently in the department we have all we can do to keep the apparatus operative.

Concur.

A priority program is already in effect for the rehabilitation of apparatus and equipment.

This bears out the need for a larger than normal workshop.

Chauffeur's reports are filed twice a month with this information (list of defects) and have been for a very long time with little or no action resulting.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is little disagreement with this recommendation although some comments imply that some action has been started toward compliance.

Rec. 3. Completely rehabilitate all fire fighting equipment carried on the apparatus, particular attention is directed to the ladders.

F. D. Comments: As a result of the Finance Commission study, orders have been transmitted by the Chief

of Department to the company officers that all tools, ladders, axes, and fire extinguishers be maintained by the men.

Concur.

This problem will be overcome but cannot be done until apparatus that carries the equipment is rehabilitated.

Strict supervision by company officers can keep all equipment carried on apparatus in first class condition.

If the conditions mentioned in this recommendation exist it is certainly on a very limited basis and can be easily corrected.

In my inspections or contact with the fire fighting forces on the fire grounds I have not observed any ground ladders to be in an unsafe condition. A company officer would certainly be remiss in his duty if he: permitted any unsafe ladder to remain in service. Facilities for grinding axes should be provided all ladder companies.

I am in full agreement (with the recommendation).

The rules and regulations of the department place the responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the equipment charged to a company as part of the duties of the Company Commander. The Company Commander as defined in this rule book is the Fire Captain and in his absence the Fire Lieutenant. The men designated as Chauffeurs are instructed in the care and upkeep of apparatus they drive. Company members are required to do routine maintenance of all equipment daily. The Boston Fire Department has always taken pride in their equipment which is substantiated by the many fine rescues and reputation which they hold as a firefighting core nationwide and as one officer who has had the privelege of working with these men, I take exception to this particular observation (axes, ladders, and equipment in poor condition). If this were because of the neglect of the officers or the men it would be reflected in their performance at fires.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is really no disagreement with this recommendation although a few individuals tried to deny that equipment was in poor condition. The facts are that a large amount of the equipment was in deplorable condition.

Rec. 4. Inaugurate a regular apparatus maintenance program, including a daily in-station check by the driver, a monthly in-station inspection and servicing, and quarterly, semi-annual, and yearly inspections; provide printed forms showing the items to be checked and requiring a signature. Any defects noted to be corrected as soon as possible.

F. D. Comments: A request for a study by the Administrative Services Division was approved weeks before this report was finished relative to the updating of records and forms in the Maintenance Division. As a result of the Finance Commission study, I have ordered the printing of the necessary forms to initiate the preventative maintenance of apparatus by the operator of the vehicles on a daily basis. The form in each case will be countersigned by the officer in charge.

Concur, it is partially done now.

A program for servicing the apparatus in stations at regular intervals is already in effect. Apparatus reports and reports on special equipment have been sent in by Captains for years.

In my opinion this recommendation is just a carbon copy of the procedure now in effect in this department.

This check is made every day on change of platoons. A printed form would be a good idea provided it solved anything - witness the chauffeur's report bimonthly of defects, many of which simply continue to exist although constantly reported.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Although there are provisions for reporting defects, this does not constitute a preventative maintenance program. In addition, even though reported in many instances nothing has been done to correct the defects.

Rec. 5. Establish a regular apparatus replacement program so that apparatus will not remain in active service more than 20 years. Based on the recommended number of companies, this will require purchasing two pumpers each year and three ladder trucks every two years.

F.D. Comments: It has been the desire of the Boston Fire Department for years to have an annual replacement program for apparatus and equipment. The present difficulties in maintenance and repair of apparatus stem from this lack of replacement of apparatus over the last ten or twelve years.

Concur.

Reduce to a 15 year age.

This recommendation is good but does not take into account that much of our apparatus is now over 20 years old. Before such a system could be established, a great number of pieces must be replaced in a much shorter period of time, and the survey does not reflect the expense involved immediately. Furthermore, it is questionable if the pumps purchased last year will be in service 10 years from now, let alone 20 years, due to the poor quality. It is doubtful if any apparatus will last 20 years under present work loads.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no disagreement with the recommendation. Several people did point out that a large amount of apparatus is presently on order. There is no question that the new apparatus is needed; however, if a regular replacement program is not adopted, the department will soon find itself in the same situation as at present.

Rec. 6. Revise the specifications used to purchase apparatus to cover important items such as load carrying capacity, and to eliminate unduly restrictive items.

F.D. Comments: Specifications are presently being drawn up for fire apparatus by a professional automotive engineer whose services were authorized by the mayor more than four months ago.

Concur, accomplished.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is almost complete agreement with recommendation, only one person disagreed. An automotive engineer has been retained to assist in preparing specifications. Much of the problems with the recently purchased equipment could have been avoided with proper specifications.

Rec. 7. Standardize on 1000 gpm pumpers and 100-ft. and 85-ft. aerial ladders for future apparatus purchases.

F.D. Comments: The fire department is standardizing its apparatus by purchasing 1250 gpm pumps and 100-ft. aerial ladder trucks.

Concur. Standardization very important. All aerial ladders 100-ft. and pumpers of a size compatible with its requirement in a given location.

It is difficult to understand why we should standardize on 1000 gpm pumps when our hydrants are capable of delivering in excess of that amount of water. This would restrict our ability to get everything possible out of our hydrants. This department should never purchase an aerial ladder under 100 ft. in length. The extra 15 feet each over an 85-foot ladder has proven itself time and again in our department, and neither the cost nor the length of the vehicle with 100-ft. ladder are excessive.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is general agreement with recommendation except that many of the chiefs wish to standardize on 1250 gpm pumpers and 100-ft. aerial ladders. The most important part of this recommendation is that there be standardization. The cost of 1250 gpm pump over a 1000 gpm pump is relatively low although as a practical matter, Boston does not need pumps with capacities in excess of 1000 gpm capacity. The 85-ft. aerial ladders would be adequate in many sections of Boston.

Rec. 8. Do not permit apparatus known to be in poor condition to remain in service, such as was done with pumpers after the 1968 annual pumper tests.

F.D. Comments: The practice of permitting apparatus known to be in poor condition to remain in service is strictly not permitted. In order to prevent any failures at the scene of the fire by the pumpers, the Superintendent of Maintenance has arranged to have daily inspection reports submitted by the officer in charge of each company. Failure to pump will result in immediate removal from service.

Concur.

It is not a practice to permit apparatus in poor condition to remain in service.

Apparatus in poor condition is not allowed to remain in service.

I am in full agreement.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Despite the denials, the fire department records show that apparatus known to be in poor condition was allowed to remain in service. This is shown not only by allowing a pumper which had failed its annual test to remain in service with no repairs ever ordered or made, but also by the many reports of defects on which no action was taken.

Rec. 9. Maintain five fully equipped pumpers and four fully equipped aerial ladder trucks, in good condition, in reserve at strategic locations throughout the City, to quickly replace apparatus in service which experiences mechanical difficulties.

F.D. Comments: This recommendation will be implemented just as soon as we have an adequate supply of reserve equipment to implement it. This recommendation has been the topic of discussion with the Commissioner, Chief of Department, and the Superintendent of Maintenance for the past three months.

Concur - except number of spares would be in relation to the number of first line units in service.

This is a good recommendation, but expensive, and not possible at the present time. It would be very good if the department had enough of this equipment available now. While the idea is good, it should not have a priority I rating at this time.

This recommendation has merit but it would cause a lot of difficulty in keeping inventory of equipment assigned to the various companies. At present hose and firefighting equipment are assigned to the individual company. In this way responsibility for the upkeep and control of the equipment is clearly defined. If this recommendation were adopted it would be extremely difficult to keep control and much valuable equipment may become lost or misplaced.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Again, there is basically no disagreement with the recommendation, although a few persons question responsibility for control of inventory etc. The maintaining of fully equipped reserve apparatus is standard practice in most fire departments and there is no reason, whatsoever, why it cannot or should not be done in Boston.

Rec. 10. Eliminate the motor squad and bring all apparatus into the shop for all repairs other than minor repairs, such as replacing headlights, which can be accomplished readily at the fire station in a short time by a two man crew. This may not be feasible until apparatus can be rehabilitated. The maintaining of fully equipped reserve apparatus will eventually enable this to be accomplished.

F.D. Comments: This is one recommendation of the report that I disagree with. The motor squad, composed of uniformed firefighters, are used to making emergency repairs of all fire apparatus, especially at the scene of a fire. They are subject to call for all fires 24 hours a day. I have personally seen the service they perform for the Chief of Department, at the scene of the fire where they are called upon to work on equipment "on the spot." They drive apparatus inside the fire lines and assist the chief in charge of the fire. (Civilian mechanics would not be permitted inside the fire lines because of the hazardous nature of the job. Civilian mechanics are not available 24 hours a day.) I hesitate to disagree with the consultant on this particular issue but in my opinion he did not understand the function of the firefighter motor squad.

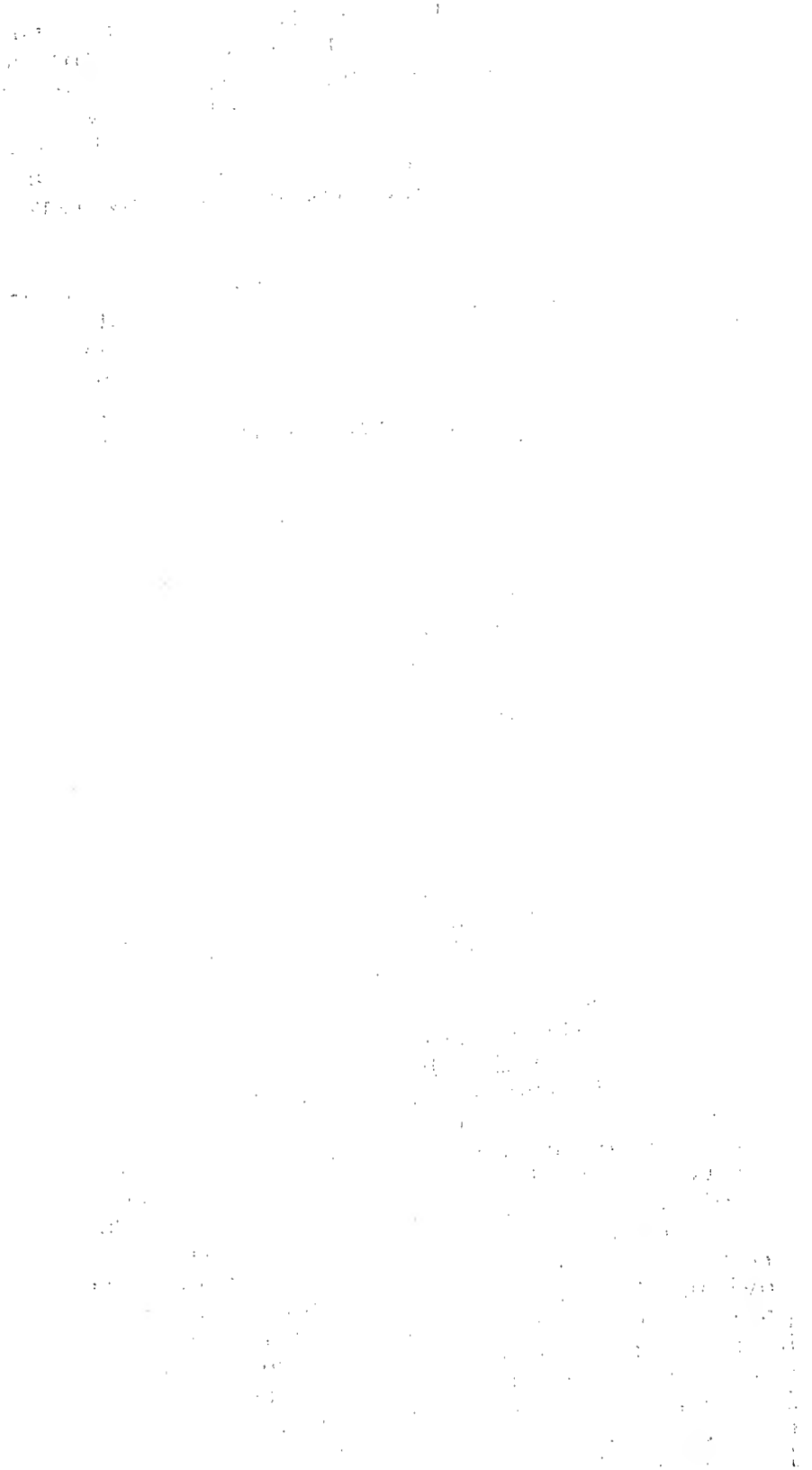
The "uniform" motor squad do all repair work on the road, in the fire stations, and at the fire. These men having a fire fighting background will perform these duties, as well as many extraordinary assignments at a fire, such as setting water towers, lighting plants, trouble shooting motor deficiencies.

The Motor Squad would always serve a useful function even if all apparatus was in excellent condition. The Motor Squad, many times prevents the necessity of removing a piece from service by making immediate necessary repairs. The Motor Squad performs a very useful

service at fires by assuring that apparatus is operating mechanically correct, helps set up supplementary pumping, relays, assists in the use of power tools, forcible entry, tearing down sections of buildings, thawing frozen equipment, and many other fire fighting duties capable of performance only by fire fighters.

All those who commented on this recommendation expressed opposition to it. Most commented that the men were trained fire fighters and performed useful functions at the scene of a fire. Many also questioned whether non-firefighters should be allowed inside fire lines.

Gage-Babcock Comments: If apparatus were maintained as it can and should be, there would be little need for a full crew of men at major fires just to keep apparatus and equipment running. The fact that the crew is needed at major fires just serves to illustrate the poor condition of the Boston Fire Department apparatus. The firefighting duties that the members of the Motor Squad perform such as setting up equipment, should be performed by the firefighters assigned to the apparatus. The consultant knows of no other city which operates anything similar to the Motor Squad. In most cities, the Superintendent of Maintenance, or someone from the maintenance department does respond to major fires to assist with minor difficulties which may arise; most departments do not expect (and would not tolerate) major difficulties to arise as a matter of routine. Until the maintenance program is improved, the Motor Squad will probably be needed. When the maintenance program has reached the point which should be routinely expected, operating the Motor Squad would just be a pure waste of funds. There is no reason for members of the maintenance crew to perform fire fighting duties. It is obvious from the comments made, that the poor maintenance of apparatus is accepted as being normal; apparently the chief officers have lived with the present situation for so long that they do not know what a good maintenance program can do in improving reliability of service.



Rec. 11. Maintain an adequate supply of spare parts based on expected use, as determined from the records.

F. D. Comments: As a result of the report by the Finance Commission, I have ordered the Superintendent of Maintenance to conduct an in-depth study of the feasibility of the stocking of spare parts and to estimate the costs necessary for stocking and parts. A further study by the Administrative Services Department of the record keeping system of the Maintenance Division was requested a month ago.

Basically concur - with so many different models of equipment, it is not always efficient to carry large inventories.

The keeping of all types of spare parts is unrealistic, it has not worked out in the past due to the large number of various parts needed (too expensive).

Concur.

I agree with this but with all the different types of apparatus, the cost would be prohibitive.

Almost an impossibility due to age. This is where standardization of apparatus would be a great factor.

I believe this recommendation should be adopted as it would facilitate the repair of apparatus and would reduce the time that a particular piece must be kept out of service.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is general concurrence with this recommendation although it appears that a few fire department members believe it to be more efficient to allow apparatus to remain unusuable for extended periods then to try to keep spare parts on hand. An adequate record system would readily disclose the types and amounts of spare parts which should be stocked.

Rec. 12. Maintain strict supervision over all personnel in the maintenance division and require each employee to report how his time is spent each day, the time reports to be carefully reviewed and the employees asked to justify any apparently excessive amounts of time spent on any project.

F. D. Comments: Daily work sheets are required from all the employees of the Maintenance Division by the Superintendent, who in turn reports to the Commissioner the results of such work. (this was instituted only two months ago). While the present work sheet is a start in the right direction it still has a considerable way to go for improvement. We are still trying to convince the employees of the necessity of an adequate reporting system. (It seems to be a fruitless effort hence my recommendation in another section). The Superintendent of Maintenance has been instructed as to the necessity for an annual report to the Commissioner.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no disagreement with this recommendation and apparently a program of daily reports has been instituted. Many of the Chiefs did not even comment on this item.

Rec. 13. Establish a complete record system of all activities of the maintenance division, including cost records.

F. D. Comments: Efficient record keeping system will be the result of the study by the Administrative Services Department. This recommendation will become a fact upon completion of the survey.

Agreed. But to implement this recommendation for the keeping of additional records will require the services of more office personnel. With their recommendations for a reduction in this personnel who will be available to keep these records.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Again there is no disagreement with the recommendation.

Rec. 14. Establish a separate record for each fire department vehicle showing pertinent data such as date of purchase, important engineering and mechanical details, all maintenance performed on the vehicle, and the results of any test conducted on the vehicle.

F. D. Comments: A separate file for the maintenance record of each fire department vehicle has been ordered. The Superintendent of Maintenance will put this recommendation into effect shortly.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no disagreement with this recommendation.

Rec. 15. Discontinue the practice of having outside firms perform work which should be performed by maintenance division personnel, outside firms should be used only for special work not capable of being performed in the shop.

F. D. Comments: The Superintendent of Maintenance will carry out this recommendation. Work will only be performed with private firms in cases of emergency or in cases where the fire department has inadequate facilities.

I recommend that all apparatus repair, except of an emergency nature, be contracted to private concerns, until such time as the division is ready to accept and do the repair work on apparatus efficiently and at less cost than private contractors.

This could never be done with the present number of personnel and condition of apparatus.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no disagreement with the intent of this recommendation, although there are several comments that the maintenance division will have to be improved before the recommendation can be followed. Two of the chief officers deny that work is being performed outside even though the records show that it is; obviously they were commenting on an item on which they have no knowledge.

Rec. 16. Discontinue all two-piece fire companies (companies provided with two pieces of apparatus).

F. D. Comments: There is unanimous disageement with this recommendation, in fact most recommend more two-piece companies rather than elimination. Many advantages are cited.

Gage-Babcock Comments: As stated in the report, there are not sufficient men on duty with companies to properly use two pieces of apparatus. Most of the advantages cited are available without the two-piece companies, because in all instances where such advantages would be forthcoming, more than one company responds to the fire and the apparatus of the other responding companies could be used to obtain the same advantages. Two-piece companies have been advocated by some people in the fire service for many years.

The fact that very few cities have chosen to use two-piece companies should in itself be proof that they are not as advantageous as claimed. If they were, most of the larger cities, at least, would be using them.

Rec. 17. Convert the better hose wagons into rescue trucks for the recommended rescue companies.

F. D. Comments: There is general disagreement with this recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The general disagreement is because this recommendation is tied in with the recommendation for the elimination of the two-piece companies. There is also a misunderstanding of the functions of a rescue company. This will be discussed later.

Rec. 18. Place the apparatus in best condition in service, keep the next 10 best pumpers and the next 8 best ladder trucks as reserve equipment (including the recommended fully equipped units) and sell or discard the remainder of the apparatus.

F. D. Comments: Concur - especially with the added factor of civil disturbances which more than tax the capacity of any department - when this amount of equipment is available.

This could be adopted only after the older apparatus has been replaced and all first line equipment is in top condition.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no opposition to this recommendation.

Rec. 19. As proposed, provide a new fire boat, keep one of the existing boats as a reserve, and sell the other existing boat.

F. D. Comments: I disagree with this recommendation. As evidenced later on in this report you will see other cities of comparable size and with less of a waterfront than Boston have two or three fireboats.

The department has already ordered one new boat, but the recommendation to place one boat in reserve (unmanned) thus leaving only one boat in service is foolhardy. Experience has shown us that at least two boats are necessary for proper fire fighting.

Fires have extended in the past to adjacent buildings and piers when one boat has been out of service for repairs or when it has been impossible to place boats on both sides of wharf fires. The total gallonage produced by both boats should be increased above the 12,000 gpm now available from both boats rather than reduced to 6,000 gpm as the survey recommends. At most wharf fires, water damage is not a serious matter, but the inability to deliver adequate water is. Also, the local plans for expanding the existing waterfront facilities would require not only two boats, but serious consideration of providing a small, high speed boat for fast attack. This matter is currently under consideration in the department.

There is almost complete disagreement with the portion of this recommendation concerning the placing of one boat in a reserve status although all agree with the portion concerning the replacement of the boat. Many of the chiefs suggest not only keeping the existing two boats in service but also of adding an additional smaller, more maneuverable boat.

Gage-Babcock Comments: A study of the records of the actual work of the fire boats should be sufficient to show that it is just not economically feasible to maintain the two boats in service. From a practical firefighting standpoint, the extra time required to place the reserve boat in service will not have any appreciable affect on the end result of a fire which may call for the two boats. The money being spent for manning of the second boat would be much more effective if devoted to improving automatic protection systems for waterfront properties.

The suggestion for the smaller, more maneuverable boat has much more merit than maintaining the two larger boats in service. The smaller boat could be used at an advantage for many waterfront fires. It could be manned, however, by the crew of the larger boat.

One of the chiefs comments that St. Louis maintains three fireboats and Milwaukee two.

St. Louis has no fire boats and Milwaukee has one plus one small boat. The City of San Francisco has one fire boat in service.

Rec. 20. Eventually replace the separate pumper and separate ladder truck at Long Island with a combination pumper-ladder truck.

F. D. Comments: Concur. The possibility of converting a city service truck to a combination ladder truck and pumper for use at Long Island is being investigated.

In actual fact there is only one company at Long Island.

I cannot see combination operation in this area due to construction of buildings and life hazard, separate companies are needed for emergencies.

To provide only one piece of apparatus at Long Island would mean that there would be no apparatus to respond to a fire from that location in the event of a breakdown. With the serious life hazard involved, I believe that two pieces of apparatus should be maintained there, at a minimum.

I disagree. A combination pumping ladder and truck would reduce the efficiency of the company. A piece of apparatus cannot serve both as a pumper and a ladder truck. When connected to a hydrant the ladder section is of little use or visa versa.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Considering the private built-in protection in the buildings on Long Island, the recommended combination apparatus will adequately serve the needs of Long Island for life safety and property protection. The more progressive chief officers recognize this.

Rec. 21. Personnel of the maintenance department should also witness the annual pumper tests.

F. D. Comments: This recommendation will be carried out in the future.

I don't understand what value would be derived from witnessing a pump test.

Should be done.

Maintenance personnel are currently participating in annual pump tests with members of the Training Division.

No value gained by this request, but anyone can witness test, strictly a Fire Department test.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is more agreement with this recommendation than disagreement. The value derived is that the maintenance division is responsible for maintaining the apparatus and will have to correct any defects disclosed by the tests.

(The next nine recommendations all concern the number of companies and company location and the comments are presented together).

Rec. 22: Eliminate the following companies:

Engine Co. 34.
Engine Co. 9 and relocate Ladder Co. 2 to the quarters of Engine Co. 4.
Engine Co. 3
Engine Co. 39
Engine Co. 47 (Fire Boat)
Ladder Co. 6
Ladder Co. 18
Ladder Co. 3

Rec. 23. Convert the following Engine-Squad Companies to Rescue Squad Companies:

Engine Squad Co. 11
Engine Squad Co. 18 and relocate to quarters of Engine Co. 20
Engine Squad Co. 45
Engine Squad Co. 14 and relocate to quarters of Engine Co. 37

Rec. 24. Convert the following Engine Squad Companies to Engine Companies and establish separate Squad Companies in the same quarters:

Engine Squad Co. 13
Engine Squad Co. 29

Rec. 25. Relocate Engine Co. 1 and Ladder Co. 19 to a new station in the vicinity of Broadway and D Streets.

Rec. 26. Relocate Engine Co. 12, Engine Co. 24, and Ladder Co. 4 to a new station in the vicinity of Humboldt and Warren and if a solution can be found for the false alarm problem, eventually eliminate one of the engine companies.

Rec. 27. Combine Engine Co. 36, Engine Co. 50, and Ladder Co. 22 into one new station in general vicinity of the two existing stations.

Rec. 28. As proposed, relocate Engine Co. 52 and Ladder Co. 29 to a new station in the vicinity of Blue Hill and Donald.

Rec. 29. As proposed, relocate Engine Co. 32 and Ladder Co. 9 to a new station in the same general vicinity as the existing station.

Rec. 30. Eventually combine Engine Co. 4, Engine Co. 8, Ladder Co. 24 and Ladder Co. 1 into a new station approximately half way between the existing stations and eliminate one engine company and one ladder company.

F. D. Comments: There is almost complete disagreement with any reduction in the number of companies and there are many comments that more companies, rather than less, are needed. The repeating of the various specific comments would just add to the bulk of this report. There is agreement with the relocating of some of the companies when the recommendation is to relocate rather than eliminate. There is much comment about traffic, building congestion, narrow streets, poor structural conditions from a fire protection standpoint, etc.

Gage-Babcock Comments: All the various items commented on by the chief officers were carefully considered in developing the recommended company numbers and locations. It was recognized that Boston has problems which may not be present in other cities. As stated in the report, if basic standards alone were followed, the number of companies could be reduced considerably below the number recommended.

One chief cited a specific time when three fires, including two extra alarm fires were underway simultaneously and stated that there were only 16 engine companies and 14 ladder companies still in service for other fires. A better way of stating this would be to say that even under these conditions, there were still 16 engine companies and 14 ladder companies in service to handle any subsequent fires.

Rec. 31. Provide a total manning as follows:

	Uniformed	Non-Uniformed	Total
Fire Force	1428	--	1428
Administration	1	27	28
Fire Prevention	64	7	71
Training	6	3	9
Maintenance	--	43	43
Fire Alarm	--	57	57
High Pressure	9	--	9
TOTAL	1508	137	1645

This is a total reduction from the 1968 authorized level of 440, including 381 uniformed positions and 59 non-uniformed.

F. D. Comments: If there was complete agreement on the part of the experts in the Boston Fire Department and the National Fire Protection Association with the Gage-Babcock consultants, I would be inclined to give it more serious consideration. Since the experts along with the National Fire Protection Association disagree with the Finance Commission Report on this reduction in personnel, I do not feel the Administration should take the responsibility for a reduction in fire safety for the people of Boston.

Any reduction in uniformed personnel at the present time seems very unwise. A careful study must be made by the Department before any change could be made. To consider this under Priority I would seem premature.

There was actually little specific comment on this recommendation, probably because it is tied in with other recommendations to which there have been many objections.

Gage-Babcock Comments: This recommendation is closely interrelated with the other recommendations concerning companies and use of manpower. The totals recommended, together with the other recommendations, will provide an excellent level of manpower for good fire protection in Boston.

Rec. 32. Eliminate the position of aides for everyone except the chief officers actually assigned to fire fighting duties.

F. D. Comments: This recommendation is currently being studied with a view of possibly placing it into effect during the next six months.

Concur - with one or two exceptions.

Aides positions should be retained.

On Page 49, the survey deals with this item in detail and specifically recommends the elimination of Aides for the Fire Commissioner, Fire Marshal, and Chaplains. The Fire Commissioner is the head of the Fire Department and responds to fires, the Fire Marshal is the head of the Fire Prevention Division and responds to fires, and the positions of Aides to the Department Chaplains were eliminated approximately fifteen years ago. This is another example of improper and hasty research by the survey.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The assigning of aides to non-fire-fighting chief officers is a pure waste of tax funds. Even though the budgeted position of aides to the Chaplains may have been eliminated, the positions were being filled by so-called details.

Rec. 33. Assign personnel to fire companies so that the minimum manning at all times will be five, including the company officer, with engine and ladder companies and three with rescue squad companies except that the total combined manning for the engine company and ladder company at Long Island should be five.

F. D. Comments: Concur - except rescue company complement.

Do not concur. Municipal Fire Administration calls for seven men in high value companies.

It is highly questionable that five is adequate strength for a ladder company and no three man rescue squads or any rescue squads at all should be contemplated.

Good.

Should be adopted only as minimum standards for engine and ladder companies. The recommended 3 men on a rescue company is not practical. I would recommend a minimum of 1 officer and 5 men for a rescue company. The nature of the work performed by a rescue company in this city requires this minimum.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The recommended manning levels are higher than are presently being provided. Compliance with the recommendations is vital to improving the overall level of fire protection. Admittedly, the recommended manning levels are in full compliance with American Insurance Association standards. As a practical matter, no city in the country meets the AIA recommended levels. As stated, the recommended levels are higher than are presently being achieved.

Rec. 34. Payment of overtime should be authorized if unusual conditions result in the manning dropping below the recommended levels; such overtime should rarely be necessary.

F. D. Comments: Concur.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no disagreement with this recommendation.

Rec. 35. Assign Captains and Lieutenants so that one will be on duty at all times with each company, except that only one officer should be in charge of both the engine company and ladder company at Long Island.

F. D. Comments: Concur.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no disagreement with this recommendations.

Rec. 36. One Captain should be assigned to each fire station even though more than one company is housed in the station; all other company officers assigned to the station should be Lieutenants. The Captain should be in charge of the station, responsible for ordering station supplies, station maintenance, assigning housekeeping duties, etc., in addition to his responsibility as a company officer.

F. D. Comments: I do not concur except at Long Island. Every company should have a single leader. A Captain has responsibilities greater than a Lieutenant to carry out his assigned duties. Long Island - one officer on duty adequate.

Fire Department believes each company should have a captain for more effective control on men, training, maintenance, inspections, etc.

If this recommendation is adopted, it would leave the quarters of a double company with-

out a captain for periods as long as 48 hours. This policy was adopted at one time in the past and it proved unsuccessful. Would also create a morale problem by eliminating chances for promotion.

There is general disagreement with this recommendation. Several chiefs cite the need for discipline, etc.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The previous recommendation was that a company officer be on duty at all times with all companies. The comments of the fire department overlook the fact that Lieutenants are company officers with the responsibility of being in charge of their company while on duty.

Rec. 37. Schedule vacations throughout the year so that a minimum number of personnel are on vacation at any one time.

F. D. Comments: I do not concur. Members should not be on vacation during the peak fire season, namely, the winter months, December to March, except in rare instances.

Fire fighters are entitled to decent vacations as other persons. Even the present 40-week plan is not entirely satisfactory. This is a labor and morale problem.

There is general disagreement with the recommendations, with the higher fire frequency and more severe fire problems in the winter months cited as reasons for not scheduling vacations at that time.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Fire Department records do not show that more men are on duty during winter months even though vacations are not normally scheduled at that time. Considering the other recommendations for minimum manning, etc., the scheduling of vacations throughout the year is entirely feasible and represents good manpower utilization.

Rec. 38. Maintain strict control over injured leave and require personnel to retire with a disability pension immediately if it is obvious that they will not be able to return to active duty or if they will be unable to return to active duty within a reasonable time (six months except for unusual conditions). If necessary, provisions can be made for

return to active duty status if personnel regain physical qualifications after being placed on a disability pension. At present, an excessive number of personnel are off duty each day on injured leave and many personnel have been on injured leave for excessive lengths of time.

F. D. Comments: The Medical Examiner of the Fire Department has strict control over the injury leave in the Department. In cases where a firefighter is injured in the line of duty, I feel that the City has an obligation to take care of him for a certain period. If this becomes excessive he should be retired. However, the Retirement Board is sadly negligent in retiring people who have applied. Application for retirement, I have found, are on file for over a year before any action is started. In the meantime the City must pay the retiring firefighter full compensation at a cost of approximately $10,000 per year.

The Department is cognizant of the high percentage of injured leave. There are several contributing factors which the Department cannot control.
(1) The average age of all personnel is approximately 47 years. This is an extremely high figure when compared with other departments. The age factor contributes to a higher injury factor and the period of time for recovery.
(2) Members found physically unfit for further service in the Department are recommended to the Retirement Board. These men wait for very long periods of time to be examined and retired. I recommend that steps be taken to reduce this long time factor between the request for retirement and the execution of the retirement. It is very costly to the City in its present form.

Concur.

Gage-Babcock Comments: It is recognized that the use of injured leave is apparently excessive, but the problem is due to lack of cooperation on the part of the Medical Examiners and Retirement Board.

Rec. 39. Organize the fire department as shown in the suggested Table of Organization.

F. D. Comments: As mentioned in the Gage-Babcock report, a table of organization has already been prepared and will be updated as required.

Concur, with modifications.

Assistant Chiefs were phased out a year ago as unnecessary and not required in the table of organization. A Deputy Chief is in the Fire Prevention billet--no change recommended. A Deputy Chief is in the training billet--no change recommended. District 11 remains in Division Two. Special Service Unit remain in Division One as presently assigned. There is no billet in the present organization plan and none is recommended for either an administrative chief or assistant chief.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no basic disagreement with the recommendation, although a few specific details are questioned, such as the position of Assistant Chief.

Rec. 40. Place all positions, except that of Fire Commissioner, under civil service regulations, with appointment only after competitive examinations.

F. D. Comments: All positions in the fire department are civil service except the Fire Commissioner and the Chief of Department. I can see no necessity for changing this situation.

It is my firm conviction the present method of the Fire Commissioner choosing his own executive officer is most practical and operates more efficiently for the benefit of the department.

Concur.

Gage-Babcock Comments: Opinion on this recommendation is divided. There are some disadvantages to Civil Service, such as the tests not being designed to measure all needed attributes for a position, and the difficulty in removing unqualified people. However the advantages, such as being free to operate without political considerations, overweigh the disadvantages.

Rec. 41. Combine Districts 3 and 4 into one District, and put the area south of the Massachusetts Turnpike and east of Tremont Street, presently in District 4, into District 6.

F. D. Comments: Do not concur. District 3 is the high value section of the City. District 4 is a varied area including tenements, lodging houses, schools, hotels, and many small businesses of all types. It would not be conducive to efficient fire prevention or fire protection to combine both districts.

Do not concur.

The survey quotes the American Insurance Association (formerly the Board of Underwriters) as calling for a district for each eight companies, but says it is physically impossible to permit even distribution of companies in districts. To combine District 3 and 4 would place twenty fire companies in one district, or even if the surveys proposed cuts were followed, it would leave fifteen fire companies in one district. In addition, these two districts had a combined total of 47 multiple alarms in 1968, including fifteen third alarms, four fourth alarms, and five fifth alarms. This total is more than some major cities have in one year. District 4 at present contains much high value property and the worst life hazard in the city, while District 3 has the greatest high value area with a high life hazard potential. To consider combining these two Districts is unreasonable, and to expect District 6 to take any portion of District 4 with only two highly congested bridges to cross is impractical. Both these proposals would result in great delays in the arrival of chief officers at alarms.

There is unanimous opposition to this recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: All the comments ignore the fact that the workload of the districts is such that they could be combined. Considerable mention is made of the high life hazard and high property value. Concurrent with these is the generally better type of construction in the high life hazard and high property value buildings.

Rec. 42. Assign District 11 to Division 1 rather than Division 2.

F. D. Comments: Do not concur, nothing gained.

I cannot see where this would improve the operation of the department in any manner.

In general, the opinion of the chiefs is that nothing would be gained, only one chief concurred with the recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: As stated in the report, the purpose of the recommendation is to more equally spread the work load. This is still valid.

Rec. 43. Create two Assistant Fire Chief positions, one to be in charge of administration and the other to be in charge of the Fire Prevention Bureau. The Assistant Fire Chief in charge of administration to act as Fire Chief in the absence of the Fire Chief.

F. D. Comments: The subject matter is presently being studied and implementation is expected in about a year.

Assistant Chiefs were phased out after 14 years in the department. The position was found to conflict with the chain of command in the fire fighting force.

Concur.

Opinion is divided, with more opposed than in favor of the recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There are no good reasons for opposing the recommendation, most comments are that the work can be done by Deputy Chiefs. The recommended positions are needed for proper administration of the department.

Rec. 44. Reorganize the office staff, the staff to be under the supervision of an Assistant Fire Chief, with a total authorized strength of 28, including the Assistant Fire Chief, a considerable reduction from the existing staff.

F. D. Comments: This subject matter is presently being studied and implementation is expected in about a year.

The present office staff is under the direction of a qualified executive secretary,

and with a few minor changes in procedure, the Administrative Division would be adequate and efficient.

Headquarters seems to be operating in a satisfactory manner and no changes are needed.

Most chiefs did not comment on this recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: At present, the administrative staff is considerably higher than needed for proper operation.

Rec. 45. Eliminate the community relations department, specific community relation responsibilities can be handled by the administrative staff, including the Fire Commissioner, Fire Chief, and Assistant Fire Chief in charge of administration.

F. D. Comments: This subject matter is presently being studied and implementation is expected in about a year.

Do not concur. Community relations and public relations are very necessary in a modern fire department. Civil disturbances and the general unrest in many other areas, such as schools, colleges, ethnic groups require constant vigilance and communication with the public.

Should be done.

The present administration has greatly expanded the duties of the Community Relations (or Riot) Division, so it now includes Public Relations, Community Relations, Personnel, etc. The Community Relations Division was originally created to organize the department for civil disturbances and to provide protection for members and apparatus responding into disturbed areas. It has served its purpose well and is just as necessary in this city as in any major city in the country for the forseeable future. To expect the Commissioner or Chief of Department to concern themselves with these problems does not visualize how extensive and time-consuming civil problems can be and indicates a lack of research into current problems facing fire departments in major cities.

Since the publication of this report the duties of this division have been expanded and the staffing changed. I believe this division is an essential adjunct to the operation of this department. I would recommend that this division be expanded to a 24-hour division. By this I mean, that a Deputy Chief would be on duty 24 hours a day. This division would be in charge of Community relations, Riot control, Public relations, Administration, as outlined in Rec. 44, and to serve as a back-up for the two fire-fighting divisions. The Deputy on duty would respond to any second multiple alarm fire in either division and be available for response to any serious fire when the need arises. When the Chief of Department and both Deputies are tied up, due to fires, the Deputy in this Division would be a responsible spokesman for the Fire Dept. and would make the necessary decisions and give the orders necessary to the preservation of public safety. If this were implemented there would always be sufficient Deputy Chiefs available to assist the Chief of Department and act as Chief of Department. This would completely eliminate the necessity of having Assistant Chiefs in this department.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no question that community relations, public relations, etc. are necessary to the proper operation of the department. Furthermore, the Commissioner and Fire Chief should be vitally concerned with these issues (which they are). However, there are more than sufficient personnel on the administrative staff to properly handle these matters without appointing a Deputy Chief, a District Chief, and two aides full time, at a cost of approximately $53,000 per year for salaries alone. This is a good example of details created to handle special problems and then are allowed to continue indefinitely.

Rec. 46. Reorganize the record system so that unnecessary records are eliminated and necessary records are maintained.

F. D. Comments: I am in complete agreement with this recommendation about the records as shown by a letter which I sent to the Division of

Administrative Services, which called for a study of the whole archaic "mess". Since the report coincided with my feelings on this matter, I have taken the liberty of discussing with a data processing consultant the possibility of updating the records system in the department and placing it on magnetic tape for the computers.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There appears to be general concurrence with this recommendation.

Rec. 47. Reduce assignments so that response to alarms in single and two-family residential areas is two engine, one ladder, and one rescue company, and elsewhere is three engine, one ladder, and one rescue company except that an additional ladder company should respond to areas where high life loss potential exists; response to each extra alarm to be the same as the original response.

F. D. Comments: I am personally opposed to this recommendation because it would make "second class" citizens of people living in residential areas. I will, however, be guided by the "expert" opinions of the Chief of Department and his Deputies on this matter after discussion with your honor.

Do not concur. Once again it must be pointed out that Boston has many old features.

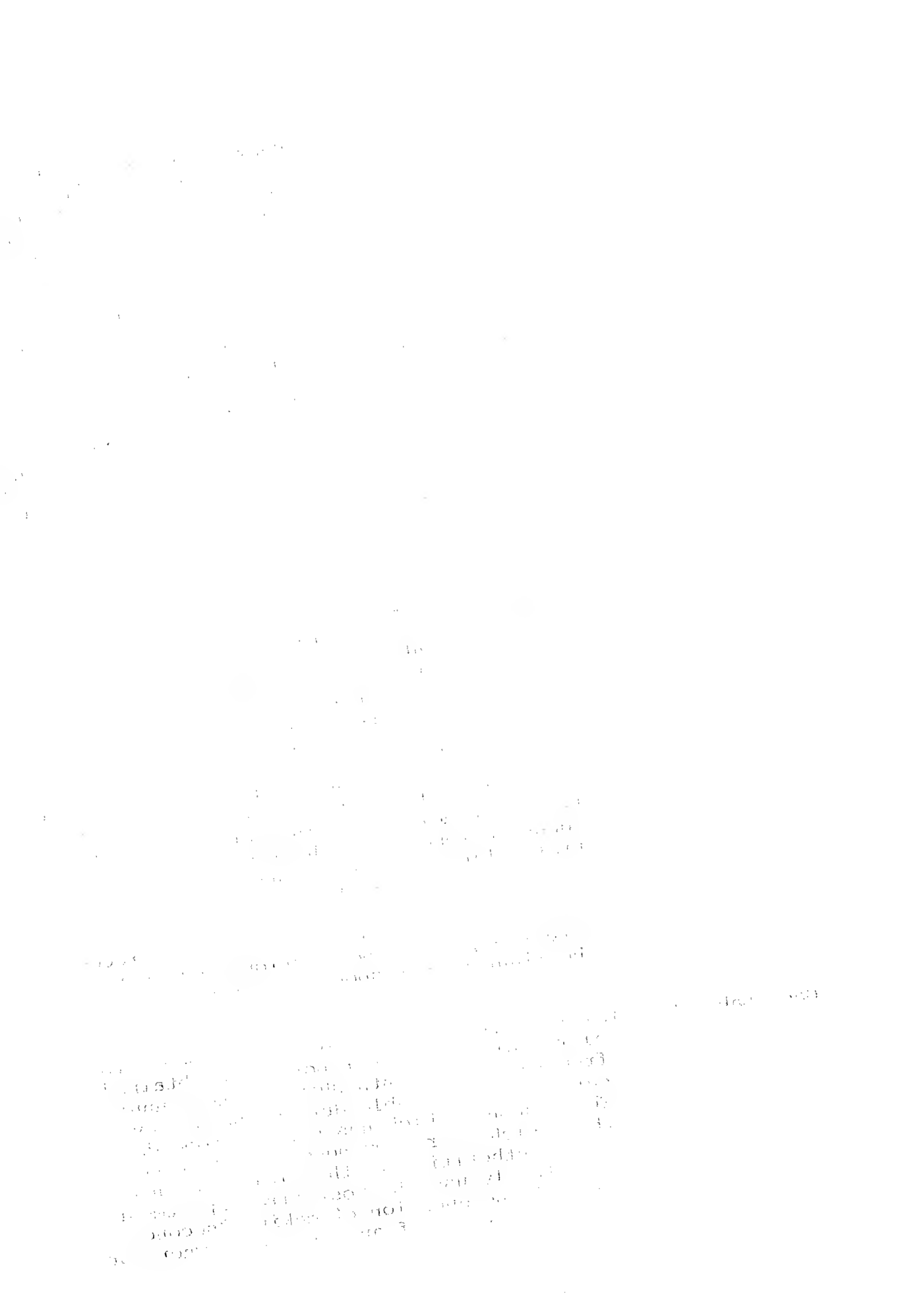
1. The age of some of the construction.
2. The large number of congested wood frame buildings.
3. Traffic conditions at peak hours.
4. Weather conditions - snow, hurricanes.
5. Poor accessibility to some parts of the city in the event of a large fire or incident.
6. False alarms on the increase. After many different types of responses of apparatus to alarms, the present plan appears to be the best for Boston.

In Recommendation 48, Page 20, the survey recognizes and approves the present practice of having a reduced response (1 engine and 1 truck) in most areas of the city from 8 A.M. to midnight. That has become an absolute necessity in this city due to the tremendous number of alarms received. However, when a call is received for an actual fire, the department sends a response

of 3 engines, 2 ladders, and in certain areas, a rescue company into the fire. This is a good first alarm response in any area. To send only one ladder truck into any area where a call has been received indicating a fire, shows a basic lack of knowledge of standard fire fighting procedures. To assume that this one truck is certain to arrive at a fire and then to perform proper roof ventilation, building ventilation, rescue work, overhauling, etc., is not borne out through actual experience. Many times at fires in this city, the first due truck cannot perform proper ventilation because it is engaged in rescue operations. The second due truck has, many times, saved lives and property by performing duties the first truck cannot perform. Of course, there is the ever present danger of breakdown of any apparatus, possibly resulting in no truck ever arriving in time. On Page 63 of the survey, it states that the response to most alarms is 4 engines, 2 ladders, only 3 engine and 2 ladders in some residential areas, and in some outlying areas 2 engine and 2 ladders. Once again, the survey is error. Whenever a box is struck in the city (and this is only for a fire between 8 A.M. and 12 midnight), the response all over the city is 3 engines and 2 trucks (except for downtown and waterfront boxes where the Rescue Company and 1 fireboat respond). This indicates again, inadequate research. The response to multiple alarms is also standard and adequate at present and should not be changed.

There is general opposition to this recommendation, and many questions concerning the figures on response to alarms given in the report.

Gage-Babcock Comments: First, the figures on response to alarms given in the report were obtained from the assignments shown on the running cards made available during the survey. The response which has been recommended is that which is recommended by all recognized authorities in the field and which is actually used by most fire departments. There is no question of making "second class" citizens of any property owners or



residents, but rather, the question is one of recognizing that different hazards and different potentials exist in different areas. As far as firefighting practices are concerned, the first responsibility of the companies, engine companies as well as ladder companies, is the saving of lives if this is required. Ventilation, laddering of buildings for fire fighting operations always is deferred when life saving operations are required.

Rec. 48. Continue present practice of reduced response to alarms from boxes from 8:00 A.M. to Midnight.

F. D. Comments: Concur.

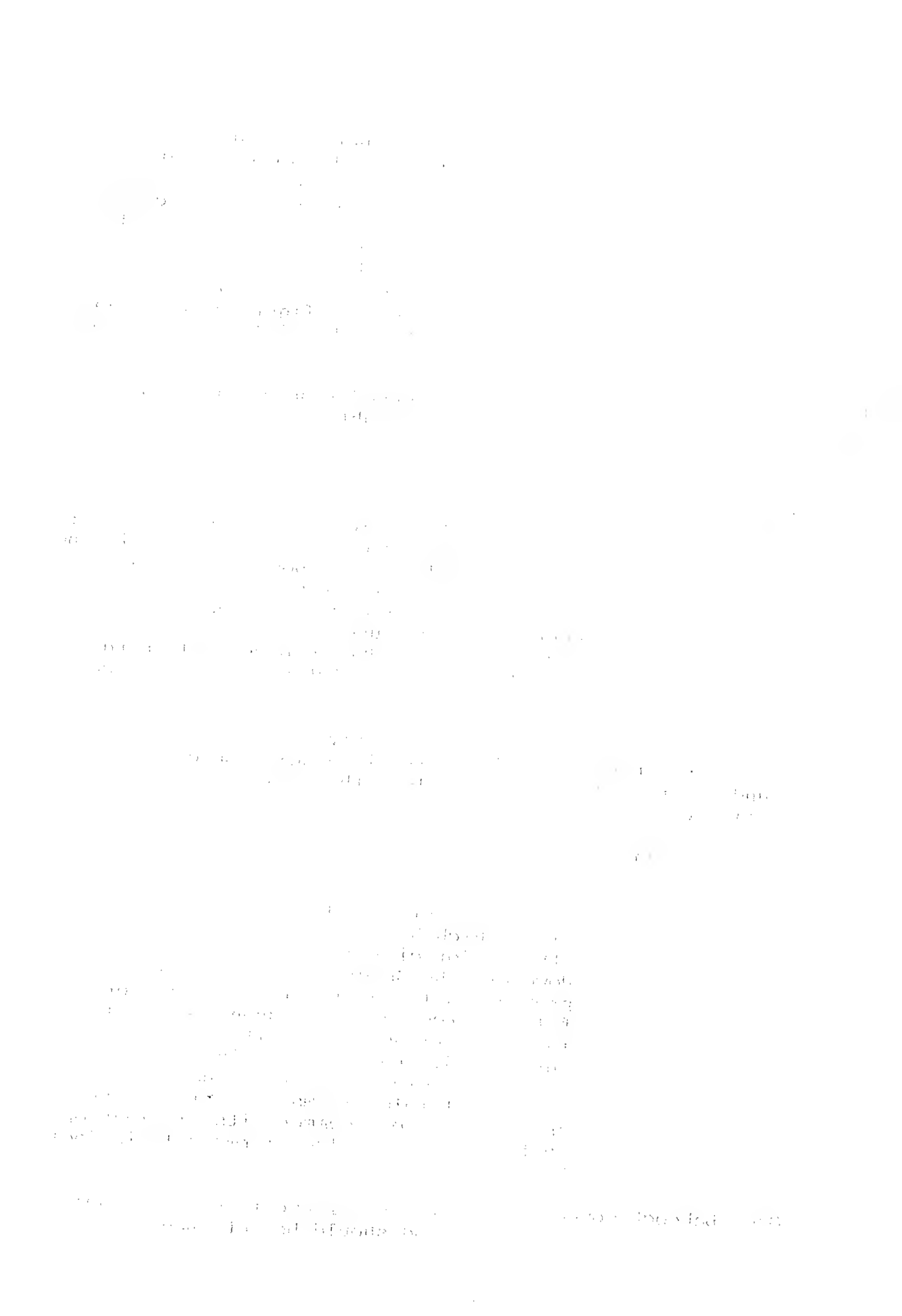
Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no disagreement with the basic recommendation, basically because it recommends the continuation of an existing practice. There is opposition to the statement that it may be worthwhile to institute this reduced response on a 24-hour basis, because of the increase life hazard at night due to people sleeping. This latter was a statement, not a recommendation.

Rec. 49. Due to the number of alarms presently being received, retain the Special Service Unit; if a solution can be found to the false alarm problem, this unit can be eliminated.

F. D. Comments: Concur.

The survey certainly has a great faith in the solution to the false alarm problem, which has been plaguing Boston and other major cities at an alarming rate. However, the Special Services Unit has proved itself invaluable not only for false alarms but for responding to fires in all sections of the city as well as on mutual aid, providing an additional, essential chief and water supply officer at all multiple alarms, covering districts as needed. To recommend its elimination on the basis of false alarms only is foolhardy.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is agreement that this unit is needed and should be retained.



(The next five recommendations are inter-related and are presented together, with comments following).

Rec. 50. Establish a priority basis and completely rehabilitate all fire stations, placing them in good condition, appropriate funds annually until the program is complete.

Rec. 51. Establish a program for eventual replacement of all old fire stations which are not suitable to present day needs.

Rec. 52. Institute a regular program for repainting of fire stations.

Rec. 53. Improve housekeeping in the stations.

Rec. 54. Establish better criteria for building new stations and rehabilitating existing stations.

F. D. Comments: There is agreement with all these recommendations although a few chiefs deny that poor housekeeping exists in the stations and others blame the poor housekeeping on lack of supplies.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The poor condition of fire stations and the poor housekeeping conditions are among the more serious problems of the fire department. The poor housekeeping cannot be blamed on the condition of the stations. Some of the poorest housekeeping was noted in the new stations. There can be no justification for not ever sweeping floors, just for one example.

(The next three recommendations all relate to training and are presented together with comments following.)

Rec. 55. Reorganize the training division to be in charge of a District Chief, with a total authorized strength of 9, and eliminate the extraneous duties such as servicing of fire extinguishers.

Rec. 56. Inaugurate a regular training program, including scheduled training in stations, scheduled training at the training facility (each company at least four times per year) including night training, scheduled officers classes, etc.

Rec. 57. Establish a separate record for each member of the department to show training received.

F. D. Comments: These recommendations have been referred to the Training Division and will be implemented just as soon as possible. Most of the suggestions are worthwhile and should improve the efficiency of training.

Since the visit of the Gage-Babcock people, the training department had some changes. A new Deputy Chief has been assigned as officer in charge. Many new programs have been inaugurated. Research for a flameproof fire coat, much research has been accomplished with the national government, private companies, research laboratories, and many others to develop a proper type of smoke mask, proper specifications for apparatus, plus a real stepped up training program at the company level. A safe driving class is in operation. Five companies a day are being trained at the fire academy. Courses of study in leadership, administration, fire fighting techniques are being prepared for implementation in the latter months of this year.

There is agreement with these recommendations although some chiefs state that the present training program is good. Considerable mention is also made of the other duties presently assigned to the training division, such as servicing fire extinguishers, fitting, maintaining, and delivering air bottles for masks, gas mask maintenance, and research activities.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The comments of many of the chiefs indicate that they are not aware of what a good training program should be or even that they are aware of what a training program is supposed to accomplish. There is no intent to imply that the filling of air bottles, maintaining of gas masks, servicing fire extinguishers, etc. are not important and needed. But most of these items are maintenance matters which should be the responsibility of the maintenance division. Research is also important and needed, but again it is not a function of the Training Division.

Rec. 58. Adopt a fire prevention code covering all hazardous materials and processes.

F. D. Comments: An up-to-date fire prevention code is, and has been, already being drafted. This is highly technical and requires careful analysis of the various hazardous materials, processes, and occupancies. The Deputy Chief

in charge of the fire prevention division is currently collaborating with the law department in this matter.

There are a few comments that the present code is satisfactory.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is general agreement with the recommendation and no further comment is needed.

Rec. 59. Reorganize the fire prevention bureau under the supervision of an Assistant Fire Chief, with a total authorized strength of 71.

F. D. Comments: Budget does not provide for an Assistant Fire Chief but will consider its establishment after due study.

The whole fire prevention program is under study. All recommendations in the report will be studied and implemented into the division, if such steps will increase the efficiency of the department.

Assistant Chiefs not needed, present set-up is satisfactory.

Gage-Babcock: The only disagreement with this recommendation appears to be for the portion calling for an Assistant Fire Chief. Actually, existing ordinances state that the Fire Prevention Division shall be under the supervision of an Assistant Fire Chief.

Rec. 60. Maintain better control over activities of inspection personnel so that less time is spent investigating complaints and more time is devoted to regular inspections.

F. D. Comments: The fire prevention division is presently being reorganized to obtain the utmost in efficiency. However, I disagree with the report that inspectors are spending too much time on answering complaints. I feel it is the duty of the division to answer any and all complaints from the citizens of Boston.

Proper control is maintained at all times.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There was actually very little comment on this recommendation. Much better results could be obtained with more supervision over the activities of the men. It was not the intent of the recommendation to suggest that complaints should not be investigated. The time devoted to investigating complaints is, however, excessive. There is no reason why an inspector has to investigate every order issued by a company commander. This should be necessary only when special problems are present.

Rec. 61. The number of arson investigators should be reduced from 10 to 4, with only one on duty at any time; the arson investigator should also serve as photographer.

F. D. Comments: I must disagree with this proposal. The very nature of arson investigation makes it necessary that the investigators travel in pairs for self-protection. Using them as photographers would also be foolish because they couldn't investigate arson, go to accidents, fires, etc. Arson investigation is a highly complex and technical assignment.

Not feasible.

Believe it is good practice to have two men on investigation in certain areas of the city for their own personal protection.

Believe the department should be increased.

There is general opposition to this recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no question that there is a need for arson investigation or fire photography. However the number of personnel assigned is excessive. Chief officers, and company officers should be trained to recognize the signs of arson, although they should not be expected to actually conduct the investigation. The police department should provide protection for the arson investigator if this is necessary.

Rec. 62. Consider providing transportation for inspectors assigned to outlying districts.

F. D. Comments: There is a general concurrence with this recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The recommended transportation will provide for better utilization of inspectors time.

Rec. 63. Consider eliminating oil burning permits and transferring issuing of other licenses to the building department, thereby eliminating seven positions in the Fire Prevention Bureau.

F. D. Comments: Some months ago I made this same suggestion that licenses and permits be issued by another agency better adapted to the collection of fees. Rather than just eliminate, however, I suggested that a study be conducted by the Director of Administrative Services of the collection system of the Boston Fire Department.

Concur - a further study of eliminating the fuel oil permit to be made.

Issuance of licenses requires an inspection by the Fire Department.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The only opposition expressed to this recommendation came from a few chiefs who apparently are not aware that the issuance of the annual renewal license does not call for an inspection. An inspection of original installations should continue to be made.

Rec. 64. Discontinue the practice of assigning personnel full time to major projects, such as the City Hall, Urban renewal, etc. Periodic inspections will suffice.

F. D. Comments: It appears to me that the consultant who prepared this report was misinformed about many of the situations involving the false alarm squad, the riot car, and civil disturbances.

In order to properly attack the false alarm menace, the patrols should be increased rather than decreased. (False alarms are the number one menace all over the country). The riot car to be used in case of civil disturbances must of necessity be set-up on a full time basis because we are ever watchful of a riot or disturbance at all times and to plan a way of countering is in my opinion necessary. Assignments of inspectors to major projects on a full-time basis will be discontinued. They will be

required to perform other inspection duties as well.

Concur, except where large compounds (urban renewal projects, etc.) are being constructed. This type of construction requires frequent supervision of water supplies, hydrants, building construction, etc. by a very competent inspector.
Fire Alarm Detail: The policing of fire alarm boxes may technically be a police problem. It has been found by experience that the present combination of police and firefighters makes an ideal combination. The present car used for policing chronic false alarm boxes has achieved remarkable success. Since January 1, 1969, the unit has apprehended thirty-four offenders. Original assignment was two cars. One car was deactivated some time ago.

There is approximately equal division of opinion as to whether full time assignment of inspectors to major projects are needed. Almost all the chiefs believe the false alarm squad is needed as well as the riot car.

Gage-Babcock Comments: To repeat from the report, continuous supervision of any project is not needed. The contractors should be required to maintain their own inspection personnel to see that fire department orders are followed. Periodic inspections by the fire department will suffice.

There is no question that the false alarm problem is serious. The false alarm squad has not had much effect in reducing the incidents of false alarms. Actually, the cost of providing sufficient personnel to maintain adequate watch over all boxes which have a history of false actuation would be prohibitive. As will be discussed later, the logical solution is to eliminate the boxes.

Once a plan for action under civil disturbance conditions has been established, there should be no reason for constant manning of a riot car. The plan can be instituted when the civil disturbance occurs.

Rec. 65. Investigate the feasibility of automating operation of the high pressure pumping stations, thereby eliminating 13 positions in the fire department.

F. D. Comments: This recommendation is one I find quite feasible. One of the high pressure stations will be closed and placed in reserve status during the next two months. Personnel presently manning the high pressure station will be transferred to fire fighting duties or forced into retirement.

The high pressure system, including the pumping stations is being evaluated for the best method of operation at a reduced cost. The entire system has proven to be of extreme high value to the city since it was placed inservice in 1921. Now it does need some repairs and modernization. A survey is recommended to estimate the cost of fully automating the system. The expenditure of any money would be returned by the cutting down or almost eliminating the personnel in the high pressure system.

In summary there is little opposition to a study of the feasibility of automating the high pressure system but there is general opposition to eliminating the system.

Gage-Babcock Comments: No additional comment needed, except concur with the suggestion of one chief that possibly the mains of the systems could be incorporated into the regular water system.

Rec. 66. Either remove or lock fire alarm boxes being used an excessive number of times to transmit false alarms.

F. D. Comments: There is almost unanimous opposition to this recommendation.

Many chiefs citing the advantages of fire alarm boxes which have been cited for years. This recommendation probably generated more opposition than any other.

Gage-Babcock Comments: In spite of all the arguments advanced, we still stay with the recommendation. As all the chiefs will admit, the false alarm problem is an extremely serious one. The response to false alarms is reducing the fire protection available for actual fires

as well as resulting in overworking of some companies. Most false alarms are transmitted by fire alarm boxes. To repeat, if the consequences of false alarms are considered, the recommendation is not as drastic as it may initially appear.

Rec. 67. Prepare good specifications and obtain competitive bids when replacing fire alarm control equipment.

F. D. Comments: Concur.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no opposition to this recommendation.

Rec. 68. Discontinue practice of installing fire alarm boxes in single family and two family residential areas.

F. D. Comments: There is unanimous opposition to this recommendation.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The records show that fire alarm boxes in single and two-family residential areas <u>are not</u> used to transmit alarms of fire. Most cities have discontinued the practice of installing boxes in these areas.

Rec. 69. Investigate the feasibility of transferring payroll function to City Hall department and thereby reduce personnel needed in fire department office.

F. D. Comments: Do not concur. The payroll division functions with extremely high efficiency in its present form. The transfer to City Hall would require the same number of employees there. The fire department could reduce the number by 5 or 6 but the city would not save money because the same number of employees are involved.

We oppose this recommendation because this division is a great morale booster for our members - we feel the present Payroll Division is made up of capable people who know their job, and do it well.

Gage-Babcock Comments: It is most likely that this function could be absorbed by City Hall at a considerable cost saving.

(The next two recommendations are presented together with comments following).

Rec. 70. Investigate feasibility of Port Authority sharing cost of new fire boat.

Rec. 71. Obtain authority for fire department to control hazardous conditions in Port Authority property.

F. D. Comments: These recommendations are already being discussed between Administrative Services Department and the Port Authority. To make it mandatory will require a change in the law. Approximately four months ago I wrote to the law department stating that such an amendment should be offered for consideration by the General Court.

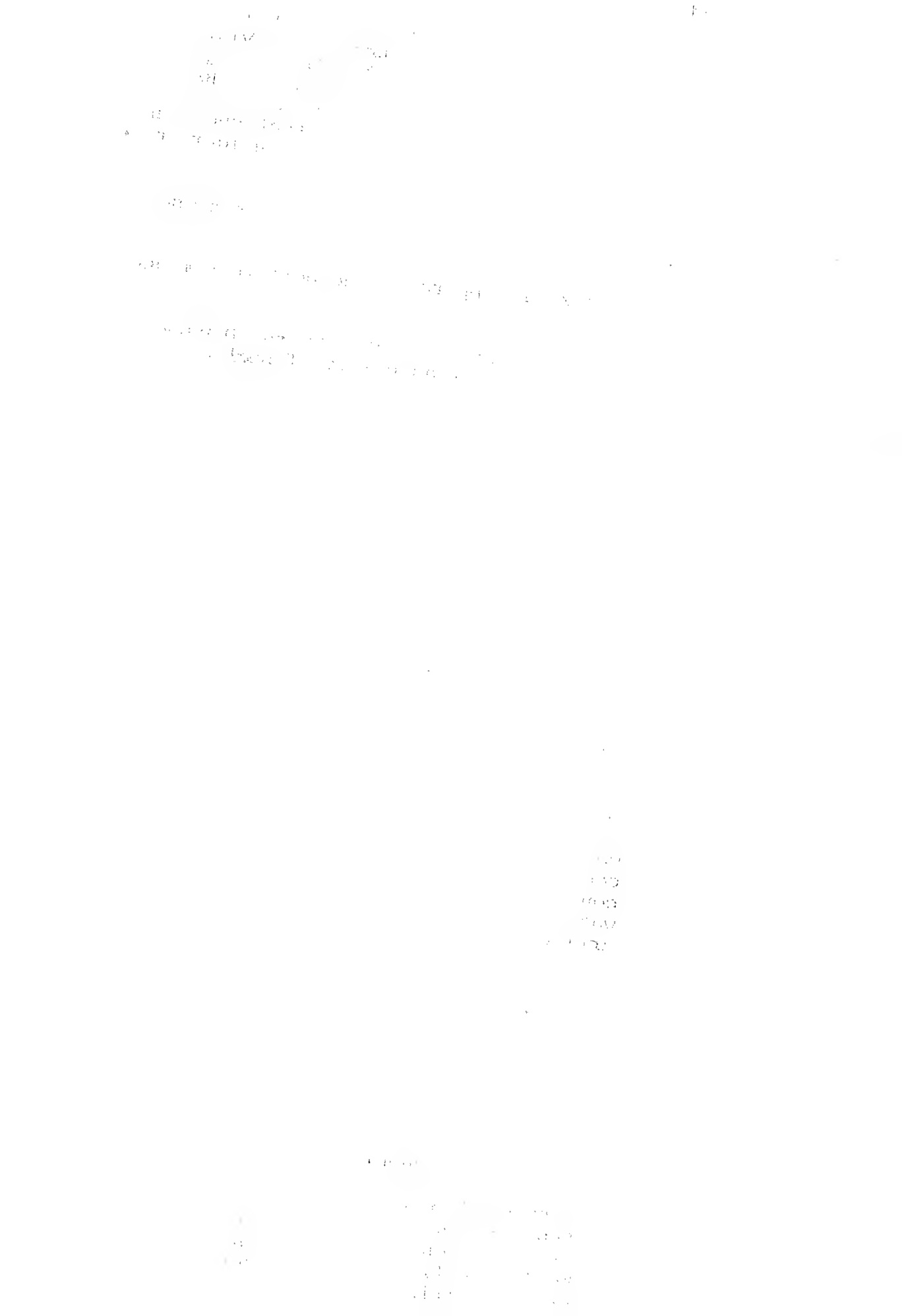
Gage-Babcock Comment: There is unanimous support for these recommendations.

Rec. 72. Provide salvage covers for all apparatus and perform salvage type work at fires.

F. D. Comments: A study is being conducted by the Deputy Chiefs into the feasibility of such a recommendation.

Concur, with qualifications. Some salvage work should be performed by the department. When the local salvage company, supported by the insurance companies, was deactivated, the administration in office at the time was of the opinion that if the insurance companies did not consider it worthwhile, the fire department should not do it. Much salvage work reduces the cost of settling claims by the insurance company. All insurance companies doing business within the city limits should be required to pay a percentage of all fire insurance business conducted in the city to the city to help support its fire department. Salvage operations conducted under these conditions would benefit both the insurance companies and the citizens.

We oppose this idea, because when an engine company arrives at a fire, they must first concentrate on saving lives, and then get water on the fire. When a ladder company arrives at a fire, the men must save lives



which are in jeopardy, and then go to work gaining entrance, ventilating, etc. In view of the fact the men who made the "study" aren't professional Firefighters, they are not aware that ALL the men on an engine company are needed to run and operate lines at a fire - that ALL the men on a ladder company are needed to throw ladders, force entries, and ventilate - and that no men would be available to throw salvage covers. What makes this recommendation all the more ridiculous, is that these same men say that a Boston fire company can operate with one officer and four men - and then they say that the Firefighter should do salvage work. Our job is to extinguish fires. We feel the Insurance Companies should provide the manpower to do salvage work.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The general consensus seems to be that the salvage work benefits only the insurance companies. This is ridiculous, it benefits the citizens much more. The fire department's function is not merely the extinguishment of fires, rather it is the reduction of loss, one means of which is the extinguishment of fire. Anything which can be done to reduce loss should be done. Salvage work is performed by all progressive fire departments, and with manning not exceeding that recommended for Boston. In spite of the claims, at most fires there is manpower available to spread salvage covers.

Rec. 73. Provide certain additional equipment for apparatus.

F. D. Comments: This recommendation will be put into effect within a few months as funds become available.

Concur.

1. A first aid kit is carried by companies.
2. Present policy is to shut down system, and owner or occupant has private company place system back in service. Carrying sprinkler stops would require department to take over this type of work.
3. Brooms are carried.
4. Ladder companies and rescue units carry bolt cutters.

5. Twenty-four of the twenty-nine ladder companies carry ladder pipes now. Eight of the twenty-four trucks are equipped with two ladder pipes. Other ladder trucks, because of the type of ladder, are not equipped with a ladder pipe.
6. If salvage is to be accomplished, mops, squeegees, and other allied equipment must be carried.
7. Oxy-acetylene cutting now carried by rescue units and present squad companies.
8. All squad-engine companies, some ladder companies, and the rescue company carry resuscitators. There is much controversy on the values of resuscitators versus the mouth to mouth system by the medical profession. The department at present is using both methods.

Gage-Babcock Comments: The only disagreement with the recommendation is over the use of sprinkler stops and, to a lesser degree, to the mops, squeegees, etc., for salvage work. Mention is made that if sprinkler stops are used, they may be allowed to remain rather than installing new heads. On the other hand, if the system is shut-off, it may be allowed to remain shut-off. In either case, it should be the responsibility of the fire department to check to see that the system has been restored to service. The big advantage of sprinkler stops over shutting off the system is that the system remains in partial service while awaiting restoration to full service. This has proven to be needed at many fires. The comments are made that some of the equipment recommended is already provided and this is cited to prove lack of adequate research. The department furnished an inventory of equipment carried on each vehicle and these inventories were thoroughly checked and tabulated. Any errors which may appear are due to improper records of the department, not improper research.

Rec. 74. Require more private protection, thereby reducing future public fire protection needs.

F. D. Comments: Concur. This recommendation includes a very wide area. All fire departments are in accord with this recommendation, but it is

almost impossible to get such encompassing legislation passed.

Gage-Babcock Comments: There is no opposition to this recommendation, although many chiefs state that it requires legislative action beyond their authority, which is true. This is a long range recommendation.